

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Laboratory of Entrepreneurship and Business Planning

2526-1-F7603Q020

Aims

The laboratory course is thought of as hands-on training to support students in developing both the mindset and the practical skills needed for entrepreneurial success.

The laboratory course takes an experiential approach, integrating conceptual knowledge with real-world case studies and hands-on activities to foster critical thinking and entrepreneurial decision-making skills. It also explores the psychological and cognitive dimensions of entrepreneurship. Through interactive experiments, students will examine the personal traits and motivations that shape entrepreneurial intention. The laboratory course further instructs regarding the purpose and structure of a business plan, conducting feasibility analysis, and evaluating industry and market conditions. Attention is given to teach students how to prepare and present a real business plan. To this purpose, the course covers financial projections, providing tools for evaluating profitability of strategic options and attracting investors.

The module on Entrepreneurship aims to equip students with a practical understanding of entrepreneurship and innovation. Through the exploration of relevant theories and models, students will develop insight into the entrepreneurial process, typical startup dynamics, and the strategic challenges faced by entrepreneurs.

The module on Business Planning provides the strategic, technical and financial foundations necessary to develop a successful business plan (BP). It covers the topics from business idea development, market analysis to financial assessment. In addition, it provides the foundations of effective BP presentation techniques.

Knowledge and understanding

At the end of the course the student will have a fundamental understanding of:

- importance of competitive business idea;
- · market analysis tools;
- · strategy development;
- · management and operation aspects;
- designing business plans.

Applying knowledge and understanding

At the end of the course the student will be able to:

- develop a business idea;
- develop conduct market analyses;
- design competitive strategies;
- · develop a business plan;
- present a busines idea in form of a pitch presentation.

Making judgements

At the end of the course the student will be able to:

- apply the acquired knowledge in various contexts;
- transfer the concepts and approaches introduced in a certain context to connected fields;
- elaborate the concepts discussed in the course.

Communication skills

At the end of the course the student should be able to

- analyse problems in the areas covered by the course in a clear and concise way;
- explain orally with a suitable language the objectives, the procedures and the results of the elaborations carried out.

Learning skills

At the end of the course the student should be able to different from those presented during the course, and to understand the topics covered in the scientific literature concerning the sustainability issue.

Contents

Concepts related to entrepreneurship

- innovation;
- common dynamics of startup development;
- relation of above aspects and their practical application to and within entrepreneurial projects.

Attitudes, motivations, and entrepreneurial intention

Business case studies with a focus on the Italian ecosystem to illustrate entrepreneurial practices

- generation and development of an innovative business idea;
- identification of the problem (or the opportunity) and solution (value proposition);
- conducting market analysis and competitive strategy;
- developing the business idea: POC, prototyping and MVP;
- design of the management of operations.

Business planning

- the what and why of a business plan;
- developing the business idea;
- · feasibility assessment;
- · business plan preparation;
- competitive analysis (industry and market analysis);
- recipe for a successful business (marketing plan, management plan, operations, and product development);
- financial analysis;
- business plan presentation.

Detailed program

- The course familiarizes students with the fundamental theories, models and principles of entrepreneurship and innovation through a practical approach. Students will explore key theoretical frameworks such as Schumpeterian innovation and creative destruction, effectuation theory, the resource-based view, and the lean startup methodology, alongside practical models like the Business Model Canvas and the Javelin Board.
- The course discusses psycho-cognitive antecedents of entrepreneurial intention by running a simple experiment with students to identify the drivers of entrepreneurial activities and mindset. The objective is to explore the personal side of entrepreneurship—what drives entrepreneurs and how entrepreneurial intentions are formed. Psychological traits of entrepreneurs (risk tolerance, resilience) and entrepreneurial mindset and learning orientation, theory of planned behavior and entrepreneurial intention models can be addressed through the experiment, self-assessment tools (e.g., entrepreneurial profile tests) and related discussions.
- Through the lectures, various case studies of real startups—including their strategic pivots, successes, and failures—will be examined. The case studies will allow students to explore real-world entrepreneurial decisions and strategies by analyzing examples from startups in Italy and internationally. Topics such as pivoting, funding, and market entry will be investigated. The objective is to guide students through a learning process that fosters professional growth and practical competence. Additionally, some sessions can feature guest speakers who have experience as start-uppers.
- Part of the module will be dedicated to support students in preparing their pitch presentation, a group task mainly carried out in the business plan module and contributing to the overall course evaluation. Students' support will be focused on the specific topics of entrepreneurship.
- An important tool that helps people willing to start a new business is the business plan (BP). A BP is a document carefully explaining every aspect of a new business venture. Although some entrepreneurs simply "wing it" and start a business without the benefits of formal planning, experts recommend preparing a BP. For most new ventures, the BP is a dual-purpose document used both inside and outside the firm. Inside the firm, the plan helps the company to develop a "road map" to follow in executing its strategies and plans. Outside the firm, the BP introduces potential investors and other stakeholders to the business opportunity pursued by the firm.
- A properly conducted feasibility analysis lays the foundation for a well-reasoned and well-researched BP. The most compelling facts included in a BP are the results of a feasibility analysis of the business, including feedback from industry experts and prospective customers.
- A target market is the limited portion of a sector market that a firm goes after or tries to appeal to at a certain point in time. Most firms do not try to serve their whole markets. Instead, they focus on serving a specific market segment. Separating the analysis of a firm's industry from its target market is important, because understanding the industry helps the entrepreneur to gain a better idea of the target market.

Prerequisites

- · Basic notions of economics.
- · Basic knowledge of financial accounting.
- Basic notions of mathematics.

Teaching form

6 CFUs of mixed theoretical and interactive lessons in the classroom (60 hours):

- 20 two-hour lectures, in person, Delivered Didactics;
- 10 two-hour lectures, in person, discussing problems, exercises, experiments, pitch presentation, case studies, and pitch clinics, Interactive Didactics.

Attendance to lectures and interactive exercises is highly recommended.

Textbook and teaching resource

- Salvatore Torrisi, Strategic Management: Selection of Readings, McGraw-Hill Education, 2019. Chapters: 8 and 13 18.
- Andrew Zacharakis, Andrew C. Corbett, and William D. Bygrave. Entrepreneurship, 5th Ed., Wiley, 2020.
- Norris F. Krueger, Michael D. Reilly, Alan L. Carsrud, Competing models of entrepreneurial intentions, Journal of Business Venturing, Volume 15, Issues 5–6, 2000, Pages 411-432.
- Barringer, Bruce. Preparing Effective Business Plans: An Entrepreneurial Approach, Global Edition. Pearson Education Limited, 2015. ISBN-10: 1292059338, ISBN-13: 978-1292059334.
- Slides and notes.

Semester

II semester (March - June)

Assessment method

The exam of the laboratory course consists in various presentations during the course and a concluding single oral exam held jointly by the lecturers of the two separate modules. This final oral exam comprises the discussion of various topics covered in the two modules, with an emphasis also on the connections between concepts and tools, such as to arrive at a critical evaluation of the laboratory course topics as a whole.

Students are invited to consult the syllabi of the modules for additional information.

The final score will be the average of the scores obtained for two modules, and will be between 18/30 and 30/30 *cum laude*, based on the overall assessment considering the following criteria:

- (1) knowledge and understanding;
- (2) ability to connect different concepts;
- (3) autonomy of analysis and judgment;
- (4) ability to correctly use scientific language.

Office hours

Students are asked to refer to the indications provided in the syllabi of the modules.

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH | INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION